

Published: May 22, 2013, *Kokomo Tribune* [Page: A4]

http://www.kokomotribune.com/opinion/article_7092e75e-5731-59e9-bbf1-08018d90d276.html



KT photo | **Tim Bath**
Rob Burgess, Tribune night editor

House of Burgess: Five arguments against impeachment

Some Republicans are licking their chops to prosecute President Obama.

By Rob Burgess
Tribune columnist

Having lost the most recent election to Barack Obama, certain foes of the president looking for another chance at regime change have decided 2016 is too far away.

“People may be starting to use the ‘I-word’ before too long,” Sen. James Inhofe, R-Okla., said earlier this month on “The Rusty Humphries Show.” The “I-word”? What, are we in grade school now? I’ll say it: Impeachment.

It's funny how these people talk about it like it's not even they who want it done. If you listen to them, this is being foisted upon them by their constituents. They are but your humble servants! What pandering.

"Look, it's not something I'm seeking," Rep. Jason Chaffetz, R-Utah, told Wolf Blitzer May 14 on CNN. "It's not the endgame. It's not what we're playing for. I was simply asked: 'Is that within the realm of possibilities?' And I would say 'yes.' I'm not willing to take that off the table."

These Republican lawmakers must secretly understand how futile this entire endeavor would actually be. But just to set the record straight, here are five reasons why impeaching the president would be a wholly ridiculous, time-wasting enterprise:

What if it doesn't work?

Under Article II, Section 4 of the U.S. Constitution, the House of Representatives alone has the power to impeach by a simple majority. This arrangement currently favors Republicans as they currently hold a 31-seat majority in that chamber.

A coordinated effort by right-wing congressmen could bring Obama to trial. However, that hearing would take place in the Senate, where Republicans hold 45 of the 100 seats. A two-thirds majority — also known as a super-majority — is required to convict. Those are pretty long odds given the surely party-line nature of any such balloting.

What if it does work?

Lest you think me some party hack loyal to a person over an idea, I had this

same argument with radical leftist friends of mine in college about George W. Bush. When the inevitable cry of impeaching Bush came around, I would immediately douse such talk.

Due to the presidential line of succession, if Bush would have been successfully removed, Dick Cheney would have become president. Would that taste like victory? Likewise, if Obama were to be ousted, then say hello to President Joe Biden.

Do unto others

As improbable as it might sound to some, there will, most likely, come a day when the head of the executive branch of our government will not be a member of the Democratic Party.

When that happens you can be sure it will be well-remembered how Republicans behaved when it wasn't the case. If Republicans want to maintain any kind of moral high ground on the judicious use of the presidential impeachment option, they had better think twice before going down that route. Otherwise they can't feign shock and surprise when it comes back in the other direction.

With the exceptions of John F. Kennedy, Gerald Ford, Dwight D. Eisenhower and Jimmy Carter, every president since World War II has faced an official congressional attempt to impeach. It's time to apply the brakes on this practice.

Actual cost

Since the impeachment of a president only has happened twice in our

nation's history — Andrew Johnson and Bill Clinton, both acquitted — the actual figures for the investigation and prosecution of a president are sketchy. The most recent example, the Clinton trial, cost the American taxpayers around \$80 million in all to investigate and prosecute, according to an April 1999 article on CNN's AllPolitics. It would be hard to justify wasting this much capital again, especially now.

Opportunity cost

This is the idea that doing one thing robs you of the potential time that could be spent doing something more productive. Republicans have lost the last two presidential elections by not insignificant margins. Perhaps the time spent fantasizing over impeachment could be put to better use by having a long think over how that happened and what could be done to correct their course.

Rob Burgess, Tribune night editor, may be reached by calling 765-454-8577, via email at rob.burgess@kokomotribune.com or on Twitter at twitter.com/robaburg.